

of Italy. It discourses on the methods of hunting practised among the Greeks and Romans, and the dances of the youths of Sparta are not forgotten. It is also interesting to notice that the education portrayed in the first book is almost exactly what had been given to the young Italian patrician for more than a generation; while the second and third books add those moral ideals which the more seriously-minded northern nations demanded. It is the unfolding of a plan of education which Wilibald Pirckheimer, the friend of Erasmus, describes as having been his own, and it is the attempt to introduce into English life an ideal of the many sided culture which the classical renaissance had disclosed.¹

Il Cortegiano was begun probably about 1514, but was not published until 1528. The dialogs that compose the book are feigned to have occurred in the winter of 1506-7. At that time the author was in England, an envoy from the Duke of Urbino to Henry VII. The dialogs present the qualities, personality, and characteristics of an ideal courtier. "It is, of course, much more than a treatise on the up-bringing of youth, but, as presenting a picture of the 'perfect man' of the renaissance, it had an undoubted, if indirect, effect on higher education in England. Il Cortegiano speedily became cosmopolitan in its vogue. High society in France, Spain, and the Low Countries not less than in Italy, revered it as an inspired guide, supplementing, according to choice, its obvious omissions with respect to the side of Religion and the stalwart virtues. The concept of a complete personality constituted of physical gifts,

1. Cambridge History of English Literature, vol. III, pp 23 f.